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Letter dated 28 July 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the twenty-second monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present report covers the period from 23 June to 22 July 2015.

With respect to the destruction of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, all 5 underground structures have now been verified by the OPCW as having been destroyed. One hangar has also been destroyed, using the explosives that arrived last month.

There remain outstanding issues relating to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. The OPCW Declaration Assessment Team continues its work in that regard and is currently in the Syrian Arab Republic undertaking its tenth visit. Reporting on the analysis of samples taken during the Team's previous two visits is currently in process.

The continuing allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons have meant that the work of the fact-finding mission, which is looking into those allegations, is not yet complete. The fact-finding mission team that visited Damascus will soon return to the Syrian Arab Republic in order to investigate additional incidents that were brought to the attention of the Director-General by the Government.

Another fact-finding mission team, which investigated allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Idlib province, continues to examine all the information gathered during the course of its work thus far. I take note of the intention of both teams to submit their respective reports to the Director-General. I further note that the results of the work of the two teams will be submitted to the Security Council, as part of monthly reporting and pursuant to OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015.

Although a great deal of progress on these issues has been and continues to be made, the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic requires the deepest reflection on how best to respond. I have repeatedly stated that those responsible must be held accountable and that the use of chemical weapons, by any party to the conflict and under any circumstances, cannot be tolerated.

I would be grateful if you could urgently bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions contained in decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and in Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council. My report covers the period from 23 June to 22 July 2015 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, also adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015).

4. This, the twenty-second monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 June to 22 July 2015.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress within the reporting period by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

   (a) The destruction activities at the 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) in the Syrian Arab Republic continued during the reporting period. The Secretariat has now verified the destruction of all five underground structures. Additionally, one of the seven aircraft hangars has been destroyed using explosives, with some residual destruction activities remaining. Progress in destroying the remaining six hangars can be expected if the security situation remains stable.

   (b) On 15 July 2015, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its twentieth monthly report (EC-80/P/NAT.1, dated 15 July 2015) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

   (c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1(e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. As reported previously, all declared chemicals have been removed from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, all declared stocks of the Category 1 chemicals have been destroyed, and all effluents that were produced by the neutralisation process of sulphur mustard and DF on board the United States vessel MV Cape Ray have been destroyed at the Ekokem facility in Finland and at the GEKA facility in Germany. A total of 93.7% of the Category 2 chemicals has now been destroyed, representing a combined total of 98.8% of all chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, including the isopropanol previously destroyed in the Syrian Arab Republic. With regard to the destruction of the remaining Category 2 chemical, hydrogen fluoride (HF), a total of 48.7% of the declared quantity has already been destroyed. In this regard, Veolia ES Technical Solutions, LLC in the United States of America has made progress in ensuring the safe temporary storage, and further processing, of the 49 remaining corroded HF cylinders. The destruction activities are expected to be completed before the end of 2015, and the Secretariat will continue to brief States Parties in The Hague on these activities.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

7. In the context of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has continued and nine OPCW staff members were deployed as part of that Mission as at the cut-off date of this report. Ambassador José Artur Denot Medeiros of Brazil, in his capacity as Special Adviser to the Director-General on Syria, travelled to Damascus for meetings with senior Syrian officials and UNOPS staff from 13 to 15 July 2015.

8. The Director-General has continued to communicate with senior representatives of the States Parties hosting a destruction facility or providing assistance with the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and with senior officials of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

9. The Secretariat and the Syrian authorities have continued to cooperate on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration, as encouraged by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session (paragraph 6.17 of EC-76/6, dated 11 July 2014). The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), having completed its ninth visit to the Syrian Arab Republic as previously reported, issued a note entitled "Fifth Status Report of the Activities of the Declaration Assessment Team," (EC-79/P/S/1, dated 1 July 2015), which was noted by the Council at its Seventy-Ninth Session. The Secretariat also provided a follow-up briefing to States Parties in this regard. The analysis by the OPCW designated laboratories regarding the samples taken at three sites visited during the ninth mission, and the samples taken at three locations during the DAT's eighth mission, is in progress as previously reported. Once the results are received by the Secretariat, they will be shared and discussed with the Syrian Arab Republic.

10. On its tenth visit, which is planned for 19 to 31 July 2015, the DAT will continue with its technical consultations on the analytical results of the samples taken during the DAT's visits in December 2014 and in January/February 2015, and with its interviews with key principals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The DAT will also continue with its site visits, which may include taking additional samples.

11. Regarding the implementation of additional special monitoring measures in accordance with Notes EC-M-43/DG.1/Rev.1 (dated 21 July 2014) and EC-M-40/DG.2/Add.1 (dated 20 July 2014), the special monitoring system equipment has now been installed at the four underground structures for which monitoring was originally planned and is functioning as expected.

Supplementary resources

12. The total contributions of EUR 50.3 million in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons and the contributors thereto remain unchanged from the previous report.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

13. The last monthly report provided information regarding two separate missions conducted by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). A team from the FFM visited Damascus, where it conducted interviews with alleged victims and collected other information relevant to its enquiry. Meanwhile, the Syrian Arab Republic reported other incidents and asked the FFM to look into these as well. Accordingly, a follow-up mission will be undertaken to the Syrian Arab Republic in early August.

14. Information collected by the two teams, including the one that investigated the alleged incidents of use of toxic chemicals in the Idlib province, continues to be examined. As soon as this work is concluded and the findings of the two teams are compiled, their reports will be submitted to the Director-General. He will subsequently share the results with States Parties and also include these in the monthly reports that are submitted to the United Nations Security Council, as required under EC-M-48/DEC.1.

15. The FFM assignments continue to be guided by the principle that all credible allegations be examined, while paying due regard to considerations of safety and security.

Conclusion

16. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the destruction of the six remaining aircraft hangars. The DAT and the FFM will also continue their work in the Syrian Arab Republic.